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ABSTRACT

The Anthology of Inmate Art project was a 353 Special Demonstration Project to encourage prison inmates enrolled in adult basic education/General Educational Development (ABE/GED) programs to create and publish their own works of art, poetry, and other creative writing. In addition to gaining experience in creative writing and discussing poetry, the 40 participating inmates received an average of 25 hours of computer instruction and used software incorporating both word processing and clip art graphics and selected courseware designed to improve writing ability and grammar. The students' writings and accompanying art works were compiled into an anthology. The 700 copies of the anthology printed were distributed to staff and other inmates throughout the correctional institution in the hope of encouraging other inmates to participate in ABE/GED and improving staff members' opinions of the inmate population. The project proved to be an overwhelming success in that it helped increase camaraderie and fellowship among the 40 inmate participants, improved at least some prison staff members' views of inmates, and generated interest on the part of nonparticipants that may translate into increased enrollment in ABE/GED. (A copy of the anthology, "The Walls That Speak," is attached.) (MN)

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ED 368 873

SPECIAL DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

ANTHOLOGY OF INMATE ART

FAYETTE COUNTY COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY, INC.
137 NORTH BEESON AVENUE
UNIONTOWN, PA. 15401
(412) 437-6050

A SPECIAL DEMONSTRATION PROJECT # 98-3015
$5,000
FUNDED BY THE PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
JULY 1, 1992 TO JUNE 30, 1993

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ABSTRACT PAGE

Title: Anthology of Inmate Art

Project No.: 98-3015 Funding: Pennsylvania Department of Education

Project Director: Kim Hawk Phone No.: (412) 437-6050

Agency Address: Fayette County Community Action Agency Inc. 137 North Beeson Avenue, Uniontown, PA. 15401

Description: The Anthology of Inmate Art was a collection of poems and art work that was done by the inmate students as part of their literature studies for the ABE/GED class. It was hoped that this project would teach them valuable skills such as team work and to instill in the belief that they can do something positive in life. It was also hoped that the project would encourage other inmates who where hesitant about signing up for school to do so.

Objectives:

1. 30 inmates will develop creative writing skills through composition of/and discussion of works composed within the class.
2. 30 inmates will learn basic computer skills.
3. An anthology if inmate art/literature will be published.
4. Dissemination of the anthology will be analyzed for its impact on inmate participation in adult education programs and community awareness and support of FCCAA education endeavors in the Fayette County Prison.

Target Audience: Inmates, community, and community based organizations.

Product (s)--if applicable: There were 700 copies of the anthology printed.

Method (s) of evaluation: The methods used to evaluate were a pre and post test of the students. Also an evaluation form was used to survey the response from not only the inmates, but outside organizations and the general public.

Findings: The final evaluation of the Anthology of Inmate Art proved that it was an overwhelming success. Not only was it a tremendous success among the inmates and the staff, but it was also a tremendous success among outside based organizations, and the community.

Conclusions: Overall the project was a great success, and it is hoped that a future anthology can be written to include more poems and art work. Also it has helped to increase enrollment in the GED/ABE classes.

Descriptors: (To be completed only by AdvancE staff)

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I. ABSTRACT

Fayette County Community Action Agency Inc. (FCCAA) received funds from the Pennsylvania Department of Education for an Anthology of Inmate Art. Section 353 Special Demonstration funds were used to encourage ABE/GED students to create and publish their own works of art, poetry, short stories, experimental writing, and drawing. Specifically, the project resulted in the publication of an anthology of creative works. In addition to providing inmates the opportunity of publishing, this project aided in the re-examination of the talents and educational possibilities of inmate students, thus opening the door to rehabilitation. It also hoped that continued distribution of the 700 copies of the anthology throughout the community will result in an awareness of prison education programs thus, encouraging literacy volunteers.

While working on the anthology, student inmates received an average of 25 hours of computer instruction. Students became knowledgeable with the following software programs: Microsoft Word which incorporates both word processing and clip art graphics, and Print Shop Deluxe. To enhance students writing ability and grammar, they received computerized instruction through the use of the following software: Steck-Vaughn GED 2000 English, A-Plus Grammar One, Weekly Reader Comprehension, and Phonics.

The audience most likely to benefit from the positive feedback is the inmate students, community, and community based organizations. The positive feedback that is generated from the evaluation will benefit the students in a way that will boost their self

confidence, and prove to them that they can do something positive with their life. As of this report the response to the anthology of inmate art is an overwhelming success. The comments and responses both verbally and on the evaluation form are very positive. Many of the comments are asking if there is going to be another anthology. These comments come not only from the inmates who want to work on one, but from the general public. It is hoped that in the future another anthology can be written that will incorporate more poems and art work, and that it can also be done in color.

II. INTRODUCTION

It is generally accepted that one of the best ways to encourage student writing is to publish their work. Publication of an anthology of student creations enhanced student perception of progress. Because students texts were read and discussed orally in class, those who are not visual learners were able to participate and learn more actively than with visual methods of training. The work was demonstrated to be personally meaningful to other students sharing the incarceration experience. Beyond the basic benefits inherent in language experience activities, the display and reading of student texts also provided a social activity for inmate students to share interests and concerns. Through sharing their creative works, inmates built confidence and contributed to the positive attitude and atmosphere of the classroom.

The anthology will continue to be distributed within the prison to other inmates and staff, serving not only as a recruitment device by attracting other students and tutors to the program, but also as a possible vehicle for improvement of staff/inmate relations.

Staff at the prison often have negative views of the inmates. The anthology provides alternative interpretation of inmate behavior and foster understanding. For this reason the Fayette County Community Action Agency Inc., (FCCAA) applied for and received $5,000 in Pennsylvania Department of Education special demonstration funds.

The months of August 1992 through May 1993 were used for the planning, writing, drawing, creation of the working copy. The completed copy was published in June of 1993.

The following staff contributed to the success of the anthology of inmate art:

Kim Hawk, Director of Education
Edward A. Bohna Jr., Prison Instructor
Kim Riddell, previous Prison Instructor
James Stark, Executive Director
Karen Hunt, Director of Finance.

Concluding remarks indicate potential success of the project which was hoped would bring more students into the program, and others the opportunity to work together to instill team work and to show them that they do have a talent and that they can do something positive when they get out of prison.

The final report of the anthology of inmate art project will be provided for access through the following organizations:

Pennsylvania Department of Education
333 Market Street
Harrisburgh, Pennsylvania 17126-0333

AdvanceE
333 Market Street
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17126-0333

Pennsylvania Directors Association for Community Action
222 Pine Street
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17101

Fayette County Community Action Agency, Inc.
137 Beeson Avenue
Uniontown, Pennsylvania 15401

Community Action Education Center
201 East Fairview Avenue
Connellsville, Pennsylvania 15425

III. BODY

A. PROBLEM STATEMENT

FCCAA has been providing inmates of the Fayette County Prison with the opportunity to educate themselves since 1987, first by coordinating volunteer literacy tutoring and ABE classes, and culminating this year with the implementation of a GED class and formal administration of the GED examination. Inmates can now attain their GED while incarcerated. In 1992, FCCAA provided instruction to 113 inmates reading at less than an eighth grade level in ABE and literacy programs, often students at different academic levels and abilities are grouped together in a classroom. The limitations of working within a county jail environment often make individual and self-paced studies the easiest and most successful method of instruction. One of the potential benefits of student participation in this projects an environment conducive to creativity at all levels of academic understanding. Students worked collectively to accomplish a common goal, regardless of their respective skills and abilities.

B. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

1. 30 inmates will develop creative writing skills through composition of/and discussion of works composed within the class.
2. 30 inmates will learn basic computer skills.
3. An anthology of inmate art/literature will be published.

4. Dissemination of the anthology will be analyzed for its impact on inmate participation in adult education programs and community awareness and support of FCCAA education endeavors in the Fayette County Prison

C. PROJECT PROCEDURES

(1) GENERAL DESIGN - FCCAA has developed a positive relationship with the administration of the prison. Through the Inmate Welfare Fund, the Fayette County Prison was able to purchase a computer and related materials for use in the ABE/GED classes. In August, the educational program at the Fayette County Prison, with the aid of the lap top computer now being leased for the classroom use, was able to publish the first issue of THE LINE. THE LINE, a language experience project, is composed in the ABE and GED classes; however, there is little extra time to spend on polishing this publication due to limited time and resources. The instructor carries the main responsibility for word processing and graphic design because of time limits. In spite of this, THE LINE has proven to be surprisingly successful as a forum for essays, poetry and artwork composed by inmate students. Unfortunately, the limited resources available for publication of the project have prevented THE LINE from attaining the success and influence that it promises to achieve. Currently, THE LINE is running merely as an appendage to the curriculum. Although students compose works during hours of instruction, inmates are restricted in their opportunity to participate in editing, revising, and production of the final copy.

Although publication of THE LINE is restrained by lack of resources, the project has proven to be an aid in recruitment and retention of students. Interest in the educational programs is generated as inmates read the published works of their incarcerated contemporaries. Recently, the influence of the project was expanded to the

Greensburg Prison where one of the ex-students of the FCP program was transferred. At her new headquarters, she helped to initiate a language experience project similar to the one in which she participated at Fayette County Prison.

It is generally accepted that one of the best ways to encourage student writing is to publish their work. Publication of an anthology of student creations will enhance student perception of progress. Because student texts will be read and discussed orally in class, those who are not visual learners will be able to participate and learn more actively than with visual methods of training. The works will be personally meaningful to other students sharing the incarceration experience. Beyond the basic benefits inherent in language experience activities, the display and reading of student texts also provided a social activity for inmate students to share interests and concerns. Through sharing their creative works, inmates built confidence and contributed to the positive attitude and atmosphere of the classroom.

The inmate anthology of creative works was implemented as an added weekly activity. A special 3 hour laboratory class was instituted on Fridays. Students were recruited from ABE/GED classes and through cell-to-cell testing and informational articles in THE LINE. During the compiling of the anthology, students learned graphic and word processing, and appreciation of literature. The anthology aided in inmate's feeling of self worth, inspiring them to contemplate life goals and develop a plan for rehabilitation. The anthology was distributed within the prison to other inmates and staff, serving not only as a recruitment device by attracting other students and tutors to the program, but also as a possible vehicle for improvement of staff/inmate relations. Staff at the prison often have negative views of the inmates. The anthology will provide an alternative interpretation of inmate behavior and foster understanding.

The anthology was distributed throughout FCCAA affiliated agencies, libraries and community colleges in the area. This will help continue to heighten community awareness of and solicit tutors for the literacy program in the prison. It will also facilitate community understanding of the possibility of rehabilitating inmates

D. POSITIVE RESULTS

The most positive outcome of this project is the camaraderie and fellowship that developed over the year among the 40 student inmate participants. During the compiling of the anthology, students learned graphic and word processing. While working on the anthology, student inmates received an average of 25 hours of computer instruction. Students became knowledgeable with the following software programs: Microsoft Word which incorporates both word processing and clip art graphics, and Print Shop Deluxe. To enhance students writing ability and grammar, they received computerized instruction through the use of the following software: Steck-Vaughn GED 2000 English, A-Plus Grammar One, Weekly Reader Comprehension, and Phonics. The anthology encouraged other inmates to go to school and at the same time provide a social activity for inmate students and inmates to share interests and concerns. Another positive outcome of this project is a better inmate/staff relationship. Staff at the prison usually have a negative view of inmates and look down upon them, and it was hoped that if the staff sees an inmate trying to better himself educationally, they might not view them in a negative way.

Distribution of the anthology to the prison employees took place in June of which there were 700 copies printed. Each anthology had an evaluation form to be filled out and returned to the prison instructor. At this time 23 evaluations have been returned. The prison staff which includes guards and administrative staff indicated in their evaluations that the anthology was beneficial to the student inmates because it created excitement, creativity, and a sense of worth. It also generated an interest from non student inmates. It

was a good tool for recruitment for ABE/GED classes. The anthology was rated very highly by prison staff in regards to its creativity and design. Many guards were surprised by the talent the inmates possessed. It gave both inmate and staff a more concrete view of the rehabilitation process at work.

E. NEGATIVE RESULTS

A primary setback to the project is lack of time. Although students compose works during hours of instruction, inmates are restricted in their opportunity to participate in editing, revising and production of the final copy. The instructor was primarily responsible for the overall final product being put together because of time limits.

F. EVALUATION

The publication of the anthology of creative works will serve as a text/resource to other prison programs and outreach programs for adult learners. The text was easily understood by new readers. FCCAA analyzed the impact of the anthology on inmate recruitment and retention through entrance and exit interviews with students to evaluate (1) if the inmate had any knowledge of the anthology's existence; (2) if the inmate read the anthology, and (3) did reading the anthology or working on the anthology contribute to the inmates' decision to enroll or not to drop out of FCCAA education programming in the prison.

The anthology was distributed to 125 inmates. During the month of July the prison instructor did cell to cell recruitment for ABE/GED students. The instructor interviewed 50 potential students, 30 students knew of the anthology's existence. Those 30 students read the anthology and was interested in participating in going to school, or working on a literary project such as THE LINE or the Anthology of Inmate Art.

FCCAA distributed the anthology to the community through agency outreach, speaking activities, FCCAA affiliated agencies, libraries, and community colleges.

G. DISTRIBUTION OF THE FINDINGS

This final report will be provided to the following organizations for use by their affiliations: AdvanceE (717) 783-9192, the PA Directors Association for Community Action (717) 233-1075, and the Department of Education (717) 787-5532. Fayette County Community Action (412) 437-6050, and the Community Action Education Center (412) 626-1070 will also maintain a copy of this report. FCCAA will also coordinate the dissemination of the anthology and the collection of any responses with the staff of the Fayette County Prison.

IV. CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

In the development of the anthology, the instructor worked with various time constraints in the completion of the anthology. The various constraints were mainly the times in which the inmates could work on the anthology, due to class time and the prison schedule.

Over all the anthology was a huge success. It was greatly praised by not only the inmates who worked on it, their fellow inmates, the prison staff, and various civic organizations. Copies of the anthology were passed out to the board members of FCCAA, the prison board, and various judges. Also the success of the anthology has interested potential inmates who might have been hesitant in signing up for school to do so.

V. LIBRARY RESOURCES

Microsoft Word, a word processing program by Microsoft Corporation.

Print Shop Deluxe, a graphics and clip art program

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INTRODUCTION

Utilizing 1992/93 Pennsylvania Department of Education Section 353 Special Demonstration Project funding, the Fayette County Community Action Agency, Inc. (FCCAA) Education Center (CAEC) developed an innovative English project, an anthology of poems and artwork that was done by the ABE/GED students of the Fayette County Prison.
The main purpose of this project was to enhance the writing skills of the students in the class. It was felt that by doing this the students would have an easier time when it came to the writing section of the GED test. It also allowed the students to express their feelings, emotions, and experiences that come from being incarcerated. Another part of the project was to incorporate the art work of some of the inmates in the prison.
It is hoped that the outcome of this project will help the inmates to not only gain strategies that will not only help them pass the GED, but also to help them find a talent that might be used once they are released from prison. Also it is designed to get more inmates involved in the education program at the prison with expectation that they will also want to acquire their GED.
The following FCCAA staff worked on the Anthology: Kim Hawk, Director of Education; Edward Bohna, prison instructor; Kim Riddell, previous prison instructor; Elizabeth Elias, Director of Planning; James Stark, Executive Director; and Karen Hunt, Director of Finance.

A special thanks goes out to Christopher Myers (TATTOO), and David Sims (TABU), for doing all of the artwork in this Anthology.

FAYETTE COUNTY COMMUNITY ACTION

The Fayette County Community Action Agency, Inc. (FCCAA) is a multi-service agency serving the low-income, disabled and older residents of Fayette County through health, nutrition, housing, transportation and education programs. Community Action has a mission to:

* **Provide quality human service.**
* **Promote and enable self-sufficiency among the people we serve.**
* **Stimulate and focus on efficient use of all available resources to address local needs.**
* **Encourage local responses to community problems.**
* **Mobilize local resources.**

THE COMMUNITY ACTION EDUCATION CENTER

The Community Action Education Center offers adults a better life through education programs. CAEC offers adults a variety of instructional options utilizing classroom, small group and individual tutoring methods. Programs available include:

* **Literacy Instruction**
* **English as a Second Language**
* **Adult Based Education**
* **GED preparation**
* **Job Training and Partnership Act**
* **Pennsylvania Conservation Corps**
* **Family Study Skills**
* **Transitionally Needy**
* **Progressive Readiness Employment Program**

All of the educational programs provided by Fayette County Community Action have had a positive impact on the area. Through education, pre-employment, job training and work experience programs, Community Action has been able to empower students so that they may change their lives.

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AUTUMN THE WIND BLOWS

1

Clear starry nights and crisp cool mornings
We feel the approach of winter's warning
Farmers work and clear the fields
And reap the harvest of summer's yields
Our moods are different, our hearts they change
The Autumn season, it makes us strange
Children collect pumpkins and tie up corn stocks
Soon it will be time to turn back our clocks
Hunters prepare, for the hunt they'll be ready
They look at trees as the leaves fall steady
The taste of a late apple fresh in our mouth
and over our heads, the geese they fly south
We store up fire wood, and other warming fuel
To make ready for North wind and his chilling winter duel,
The darkness is long and the days they get shorter
There's nothing to do but follow nature's order
Fall is the season of dying, all the green goes away
Flowers sleep and await a budding spring day
Melancholy evenings and whispering winds touch
Autumn's the season
we all love so much

By MIKE SAPONARA

GHOST CHASER

There's a ghost that I know that you cannot catch.
It's not a friendly ghost, but he likes to play fetch.
When you play with this ghost,
he'll take family, money, and time,
and when they're all gone, he pushes you to commit a crime.
A caper to get money, so you can continue to play chase,
your father, mother, sister, or brother can't even take his place.

You ask how I know? Well I've chased this ghost.
Did I ever catch him? No way! I never came close.
Once you start chasing, you don't care who you hurt,
you see your playing with fire, and eventually
you will get burnt.

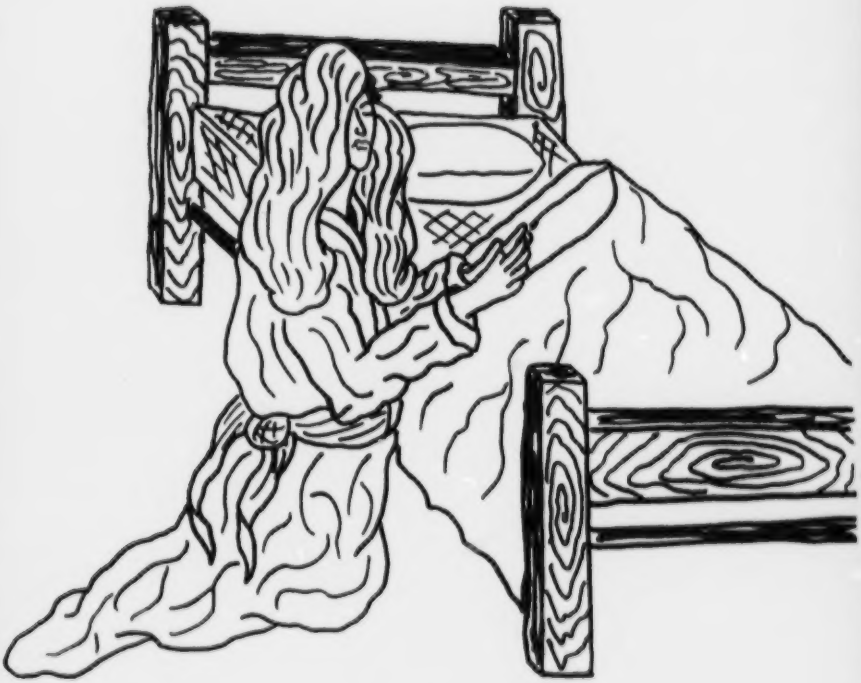
You'll give all your money to the pants-sagging DOPE MAN,
and when it's all gone, your planning the next scam.
You say you can't stop! You're having so much fun!
How much fun can you have chasing' crack or some Jason?
Can I get a ten, a twenty, or a fifty cent piece?
Your wife said she's leaving you, but you care the least.
What kind of ghost is this, I'm playing with?
The ghost that reigns the stem, the bookie, and the spliff.
You'll put him in a joint and eventually a pipe.
Take that first blast and smoke away everything in your life.
This ghost is no joke, 100% for real.
If you let him enter your body, you're mind he'll kill.
The first game of chase may be freely given, and you will dart.
What's the secret to catching the ghost you ask?
DON'T START!!

By Frankie Peterson

THIS THING CALLED CRACK

A little old lady, knelled beside her bed,
and I can still remember, every word that she said.
She put her hands together, and started to pray,
and this is what she had to say.
Lord, when the war took my Billy, I never asked why,
and to say that my heart wasn't broken, would be
telling a lie.
And when my boy Frankie, he fell through the ice,
I knew it was your will, so I never questioned it twice.
When Cindy and Mary, were killed walking the streets,
I quietly stood by, and never uttered a peep.
Lord, when you took my children, to your home in the
sky,
I never questioned your judgment, why each had to die.
But I've only one left, my youngest boy Jack,
please Lord save him from that thing they call crack.
It changed his life, it has made him so mean
his friends and myself, we don't mean a thing.
First thing in the morning, to the last thing at the night,
he's always in trouble, and in fight after fight.
He said he has to have it, and nothing will do,
It's the greatest thing he has found, until they make
something new. He'll steal, rob, or kill, whatever it
takes, just so he can buy , a few little flakes.
I know nothing about it, I never claimed to,
so I'll leave it all up to you, because I don't know what
else I can do.
But this much I know, and I'm stating a fact,
I'll kill myself, before I watch him die from this crack.
My mom's now gone, her life she did take,
getting involved with crack, is a terrible mistake.

By Ken Thomas



You say that you love me and leave me again. Stop playing these love games where I never win. I thought when I met you, your feelings were true. You said that you loved me, if only you knew. So when you get bored or desprate or down don't come running to me, I won't be around. For love is not a game where the winner is emotion shared between two.

ERIKA SESTOCK

I NEED YOU

I need you near me day by day,
to make my life worthwhile.
I need your reassuring voice,..
I need your tender smile.

I need your faith and confidence,
in all our dreams and goals.
I need your understanding heart,
that strengthens and consoles.

I need your sense of humor,
and yours was so dear and sweet.
I need your very special love,
to make my life complete.

By Thelma Ferdinandus

MOTHER 'S DAY WISH

I sent this card to both of you,
because my love for you is true.
I love you both, more than anything,
than money, gold or a big diamond ring..
The way you love and care for me,
two greater people there could ever be.
I'm sorry this poem, the best I could do,
because I would do anything for you two.
Flowers, candy, or anything that caught your eye.
If I could, I would surely buy,
so to both of you, I'm glad say,
have a truly, wonderful Mother's Day.

By Ken Thomas

DIAMONDS

The diamonds on my finger reminds me
of your love.
It tells me of that special place where
you are up above.
I know that you are better off than anyone
down here.
I didn't understand at first, but now it's
all so clear.
You were in some trouble, and you had no
place to go.
What was going through your head,
I really just don't know.
But diamonds are forever, and so was our
love.
I know that you are at peace now, in
heaven up above.
And I will always treasure wearing,
the symbol of your love.

By Lori Wagner

REMEMBER WHEN

I remember the days, oh so well,
the things we promise not to tell,
We did them together, the two of us.
With no others, we would trust.
The fish we caught at our secert place,
We would go there, and leave no trace,
For the others to find, and then destroy,
Like the dreams we had, when we were boys.
But life goes on, we know it must,
For you, For me, For all of us.
But boys no more, for now we are men,
Sometimes I wish, we still lived back then,
No worries, no troubles, no problem when,
back years ago when you was ten,
But now your a man of twenty-two,
I hope you remember those days too.
So a happy birthday's wish I send,
for all those dreams, you had back then,
May they all come true, and come your way,
I wish you well, on this special day.
Happy Birthday Ken

By KEN THOMAS

Chris
Myers

Rembering times, past and ago
of you and me.....together

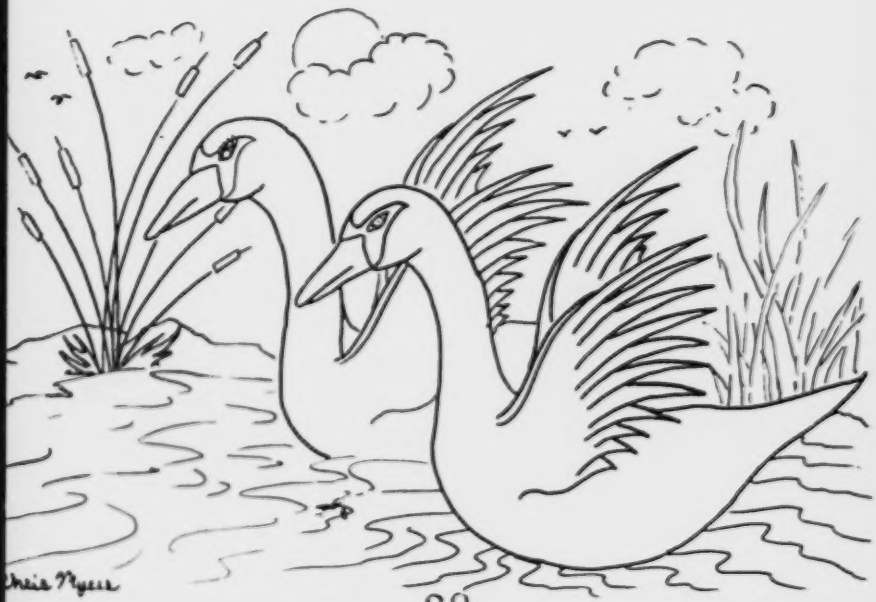
A smile here, a thought there,
of the good times we shared....together

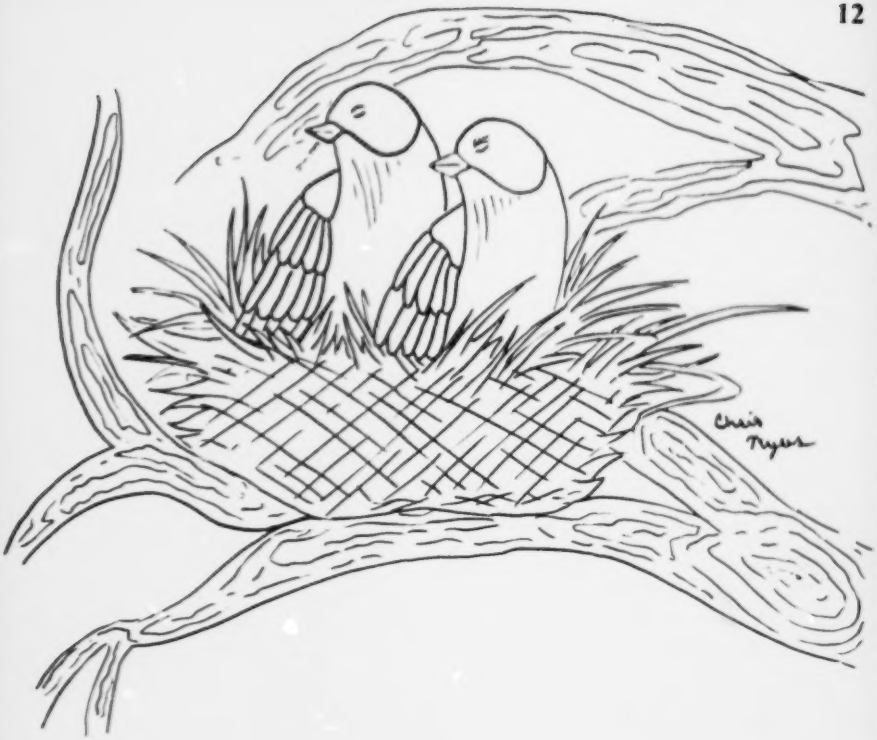
Dreams we had, some had come true, some had not.
But they were ours.....together

Laughter here a tear there
Hug and embrace.....together

If I had one wish right now,
I'd wish that you and me,
Right now, can be.....together

Ed Kozarian





LETS GROW OLD TOGETHER

Let's grow old together
And unite as one
Let us live our lives to the fullest, and have some fun
Let's grow old together and share our life
Let us be married, so I will be your wife
Let us grow old together and build our home.....
Let us grow old together so we're never alone
Let us travel life's distance through it's goods and bads....
Let us grow old together through life's happies and sads...
Let us grow old together so we're never apart
Let us be together in one anothers heart
Let us grow old together and swallow our pride
Let us be married my love, so I can be your bride

By KYM PETTERSON

SIMPLE THINGS

Simple things
for some aren't simple.
Just like there's things
that we can't do.
But because someone
can't do something,
doesn't make them
less than you.

Everybody's somebody,
they have their special place.
God loves them
He loves everyone
We are the human race

By William F. Lopes

DID YOU KNOW

For you he sacrificed his son
He gave his life for everyone
To wash away all of your sins
So one day you could be with him

This place he has prepared for you
Is real and all you have to do
To give up this life I filled with sin
Is invite Jesus to come within

It's easy just sincerely say
LORD, come into my life today.

By Thelma Ferdinandus

A FOOLS PRAYER

Now I lay me down to sleep,
and now my soul begins to weep.
It cries a song of a love I've lost,
that I can't regain at any cost.
Oh Lord please stop this slow descent,
though time has gone by and these days long spent.
Please stay with me my journey's length,
give me patience, guidance, Lord give me strength.
And if I should die before I wake,
what is left of me, Dear Lord, please take.

By Lori Wagner

MR. BROWNSTONE

Mr. Brownstone is his name,
getting you hooked is his game.

At first you think being mellow is cool,
until one day Mr. Brownstone's got the best of you.

One morning I awoke and needed Mr. Brownstone
for my fix,
never believing that Mr. Brownstone would
leave me so sick.

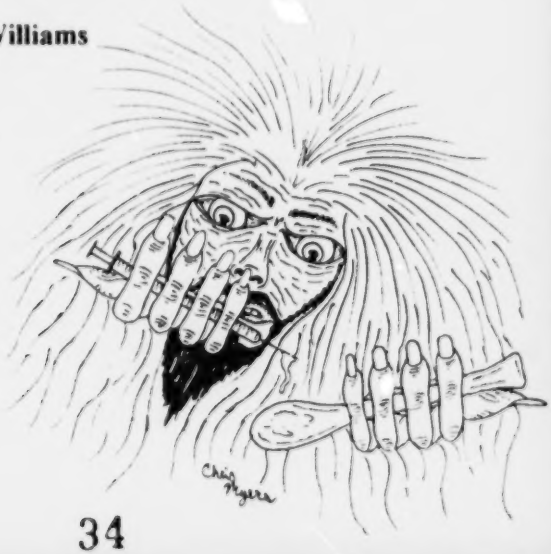
I laid there with my sweats and chills,
knowing that Mr. Brownstone had no more thrills.

For my life with Mr. Brownstone was no more a game,
it was all an addiction of conning, hustling, and shame.

So as I laid there without Mr. Brownstone
as my fix,
I knew I never wanted to be again in the mix.

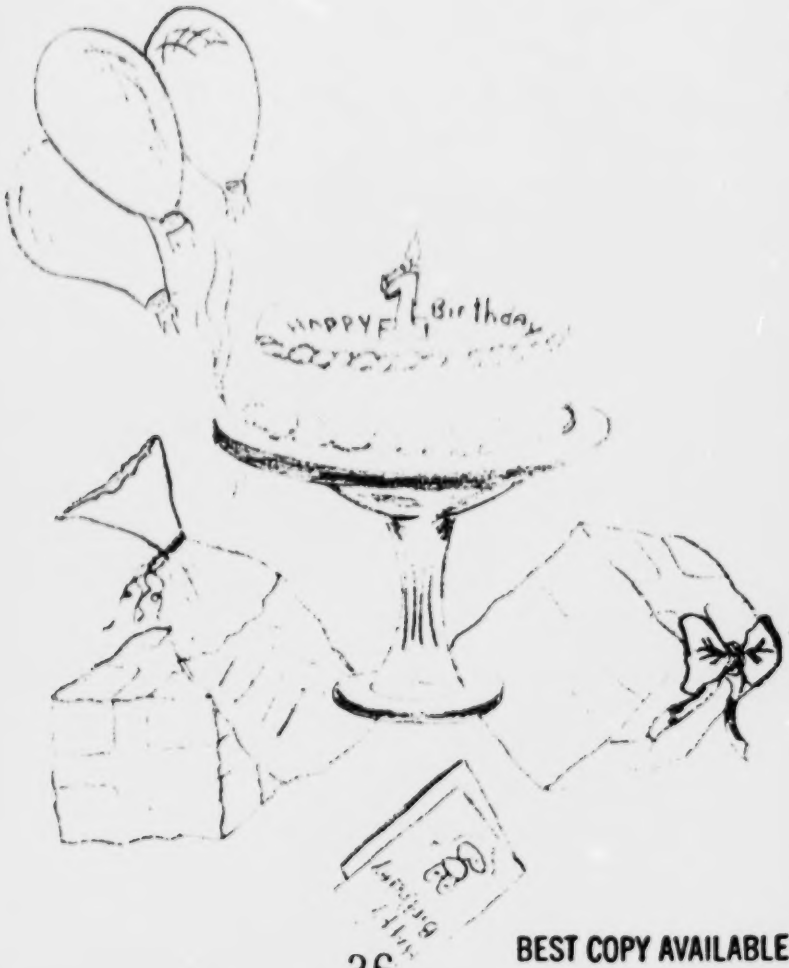
For Mr. Brownstone, Good-bye to you,
my life of Hell is finally through.

By Wendy Williams



The 13th of March, just one year ago,
your mom told me, what I was waiting to know.
She said I have a daughter, and as pretty as can be,
and I told her to call her, my precious Shayna Lea.
I was not home, because I had to go away,
and I'm so very sorry, I was not with you that day.
Your growing as quickly, you'll soon be a year,
oh my sweet "little bit", I love you so dear.
Your daddy's little sunshine, as everything so sweet,
yes, your daddy's little lady, from your head down to your feet.
And the next time I see you, I'll be holding you oh so tight,
and we'll enjoy your life together, and I'll never leave your sight.
We'll talk about your future, and what you want to be,
and we'll live life to it's fullest, yes my little girl and me.
Because it's the little things we share, that makes life so nice,
and I'll never trade these memories, to anyone, at any price.
So you eat your ice cream, and a little bit of cake,
and your daddy will soon be with you, no matter what it takes.
Now you grow up completely, but please honey do it slow,
because you'll not always be so little, this much I surely know.
But you'll always be, daddy's little girl to me,
and I love you so much, my precious Shayna Lea.

By Ken Thomas



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

My feelings for you will never change I wonder around people and places look so strange.I sit around and wonder what life without you would be like. It scares me, it's like a dark and sleepless night. I loved you so much, but you hurt me so bad. I remember all the passion, you used to be so glad. What happened to change your feelings toward me? You just suddenly decided you had to be free. So now your life is yours, and my life is mine. If that's what you want it suits me just fine. But I want you to know my love is still there. Why can't you just tell me? Why are you so scared? Maybe you just can't admit you loved me too. So that's the scary part for you. You can't forget the past no matter how hard you try. Everytime I hear your name I just breakdown and cry. You just don't understand I gave you my soul and heart. so how do you return your love, you tear my heart apart. I can't go on with my life until I know the real reason. Are you trying to teach me some kind of new lesson? No, maybe it's my fault. I must have moved to quick. I told you that I loved you within a clocks tick. When we first meant I wouldn't give you the time of the day, So now I quess it's your turn to make me suffer and pay. Do you remember the day you told me" I LOVE YOU TOO?" So now what am I supposed to do? You tell me, you always seemed to know. I will leave that question to be answered by you.

By ERIKA SESTOCK

FINDING ME.....

Well here I am lying in my bed
all sorts of things running through my head,
just thinking of life at this point of time,
sometimes I think I'm losing my mind.

I try not to fill sorry for myself,
but sometimes I think there is no one else.
Maybe someday I'll find myself
like an old penny on a dusty shelf.

I try to find humor in this life of mine.
I want to be happy before I run out of time.
I know it's not too late to start over,
maybe this time I'll try it sober.

This time I've spent in here
makes life to me seem so dear.
All I look forward to is visiting day,
but I guess that's just the price you pay
I'll never drink like I did that Saturday night,
it's a wonder I didn't get into a fight.
I gave the cops such a hard time,
it's no wonder they made me walk that line.

By KIM PALMASANO

I've made you cry.
I've done a lot a wrong and I've told a lot
of lies.
Mom, I'm so sorry, I know I've let you down.
Things just got so screwed up when I came back
to this town.
If I had it to do over there is so much I
would change.
But there is no sense dwelling in the past, It's
to late to rearrange.
I know that you want more for me and that
you've raise me right.
And I know that I've put you through a lot of
sleepless nights.
I want to do what's right,
but sometimes I don't know what right is.
I think about my life and I think about my kid.
I had it all and let it all go.
And for what I ask myself, but I don't know.
I wish that there was some way I could change
things around.
Straighten up and move from town.
But running away didn't work
for me before,
and it won't work for me this time, I've got to
do more.
If I run away now I'll just end up coming back.
Being with my friends and smoking some more crack.
I don't know how to do it yet, but I've got to be sure,
that this time when I leave. I can close the door.
I just want you to know that I am really going to try
to straighten up my life and to tell crack good-bye.
It's going to be hard and it's going to take some time,
but please don't give up on me I need you by my side.

Mom I appreciate all that you have done,
just know that in my heart your always #1.

By Lori Wagner

GENERATIONS

Situations don't always tell the truth,
circumstances are killing our nation's youth.
The young are dying at an alarming rate,
the elders are pointing fingers and harboring hate.
They taught us as children to be independent and free,
but what they meant was grow up and be just like me.
And as a child this was your most precious thought,
but times are always changing, this is what they forgot.
They'll push and shove until you are standing on the edge,
your choice is to push back or jump and be dead.
No one ever thinks of coming to terms,
neither remembers the teaching,
from their parents they learned.
So the war goes on between the young and old,
there are countless stories of this battle untold.
The family bond is forever being tested,
the old molesting the young because they've been molested.
The time has come for these stories to be told,
and make a pact between the young and the old.
So respect your mother and father too,
as they were taught in their generation, but yours is new.
One day soon you'll be a mother or father,
what words of wisdom will you pass on to your sons and daughters.
Bring them up right and treat them fair,
and their be there when you have gray hair.
And when you are gone and your work is done,
you can have pride in your son and be proud to have been one.

By Mike Walkins

A DREAM OR SOMETHING MORE

Is it only coincidence, that this should happen to me,
or was it planned before my life began, that this would be my destiny?
And when I awake every morning, are the dreams I had the night before.
Someone trying to tell me, what my life already has in store.
If everything is already planned, like where I'll go, and what I'll see,
and what I'm going to do and what will surely happen to me.
Who I'll have to be my friends, and how everyday begins and ends.
What's the sense of worrying then, about everything around the bend.
And if finally I have it figured out, what is left and what is right,
then prayer's the questions or answers, when we pray them every night.
A lot of things come and go, like what we are, and who we know.
And what if good and bad don't mean a thing, then how about, "What we reap, we first must sow".
Yes the bible is filled with many prophets, and their teachings of what will come,
so why is understanding, still so difficult for some.

By Ken Thomas

Chris Mees

DRUGS GAVE ME WINGS BUT TOOK AWAY THE SKY

Drugs I thought, did give me wings because I stayed flying, the higher I got, the higher I flew. But when my wings grew weary and tired, the sky kept fading away. Drugs started aim me into the direction of a very bad emotional stage. I didn't care about anything, just as long as I was flying high. I didn't care about my appearance or any body's opinion, or what they said, just as long as I was high and flying. Nothing mattered to me... until drugs led me to prison and that's when my sky went away. After each time of being out of prison, you would think I would have learned a lesson or two. But the longer I spent in jail, the more I couldn't wait to get high and fly away again and see the sky that wasn't there when I was locked up.

It became a routine. The more my wings spread out, the higher I wanted to get, and the more I went to jail. To me, jail makes me want to get high as soon as I walk out of these doors. Bur since I kept coming inside and out of these prison doors because of drugs, I want to walk this time instead of flying. In jail there is no limit to the sky, because you very seldom see it. You don't care about what the sky looks like because your in here. All you think about is getting out, then you'll start to worry about the sky and what it looks like. I want to stay off the wings of drugs, and flying high because I'm so sick of coming in and out of these doors. And if I stay off the streets of Pittsburgh using drugs, I probably could help a few other people from getting inside these prison walls.

By Roxanne Grace

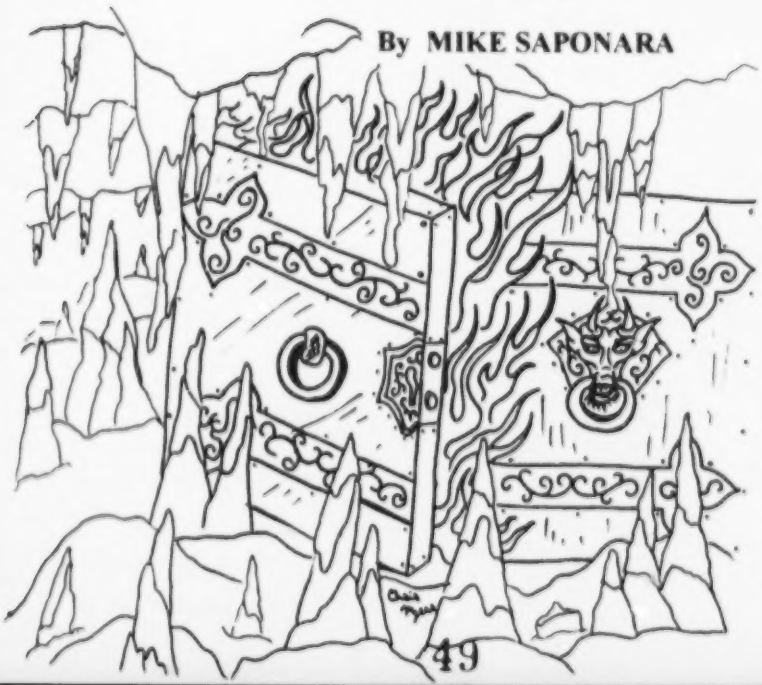
THE END OF LIFE

There it stands alone, and as cold as ice,
it's stone walls tell me, that it won't be very nice.
The gate to hell, I now must enter,
there will be no drug, alcohol, or rehab center.
Because they say I'm guilty as charged, right from the start,
but I know I'm innocent, deep down in my heart.
I made a mistake, and I'm sorry as can be,
but no matter how many times I say it, they won't set me free.
I've never been in trouble, I've been good all my life,
so why are they causing me, all this worry and strife.
I'm innocent I tell you, please don't lock me away,
"shut up", "sit down", that's what they all say.
The way it's killing me inside, how the hell would you know,
because I keep it bottled up, and never let it show.
So they throw me in prison, and they're trying for life,
everyone wants me found guilty, and kept out of sight.
Twelve people will listen, and then they'll decide,
whether I keep on living or commit suicide.
Because to be locked up for the rest of my life,
I'd rather be dead, if there's no release date in sight.
Yes, guilty I've been found, by twelve of my peers,
so they'll lock me away, without the shedding of tears.
Some people will laugh, while others will cry,
but in here I'll be staying , until the day that I die.

By Ken Thomas

The loneliest sound that you can hear
Is when gates lock down and you're in here
Life was beautiful before we came
But we're the only ones to blame
Thoughts of love and memory of pleasure
How much we lost, we cannot measure
We want to change our wrongful way
But it takes every minute of every long day
So we pray to God and search our soul
Then guilt and conscience take their toll
We decide, then, to change our life
Our past was pierced, as if with a knife
So heal the wound and cover the scar
And do our best to conceal the mar
So you see two paths in front of you,
Choices aren't easy, what we will you do,
If you think you'll be tempted
And can't do what's right
Then think of the lonely sound,
Of gates locking at night.

By MIKE SAPONARA



UP OR DOWN

I came to this place higher than hell,
had so much energy everyone could tell.
Was running around so very fast,
don't know how long this feeling will last.

If I only maybe had a drink,
I'd feel must better--at least I think?
So I get an idea and go see a shrink.
He prescribes me some pills that just make me sink.

I just wanted to feel better and not like hell.
Now all I do is sit in my cell.
So what is better up or down?
My head keeps spinning round and round.
I believe I'm going to just go straight
and try to believe in our God's fate.

By Kim Palmasano

Seasons come and seasons go,
where they go GOD only knows.
I remember being fifteen
thought I was smart, tough and mean.
Before I knew it,
I was twenty one,
drinking and smoking was all my fun.
Partied my brains out every night,
having a blast it was out of sight.
Then reality hit me hard,
knocked me down,
what a hellava fall,
lost my wife, kids, and job,
then I thought: Now turn to GOD?
Now I know where I went wrong,
I should've been thinking of him all along.
Years went by, I'm now twenty eight,
things are okay, but not really great.
Went messing around with that damn cocaine,
tried to make a buck,
huh, what a shame.
Never been in trouble with the law before,
now I'm locked in and can't enjoy the outdoors.
When I get out, I'm gonna stay straight,
so when I turn thirty
things will be great.

By Ron Basinger

DRUGS

Drugs are chemicals you use to get high,
Marijuana, cocaine, everything imaginable to make you fly.
Drugs are not good for you, they burn out your brain.
Drugs make you do things you normally wouldn't do.
Once you get started you can't let go,
you give up your families, and everything you love,
You'll sell everything you have and end up with nothing.
Drugs are harmful, they could kill you to,
so please stop using and try to make it through.
People who use often end up in jail,
waiting day and night just to get some mail.
Drug dealers need taken off the streets,
someone needs to put on some heat.
So if you want to die at an early age,
keep on using drugs, and eventually you'll die!

By Kym Petterson

THE WHOLE TRUTH AND NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH

Raise your right hand and look at me
Make sure you answer the questions 1, 2, 3
This here is court I'm Judge Y
So you better tell the truth, don't cha lie,
cause if you do we'll revoke your bail,
to the bridge of sighs, right to jail,
and keep you there to learn the truth
maybe even extract a tooth.
So turn around and look in my eye,
tell the truth and not a lie.

By Randy Dennis

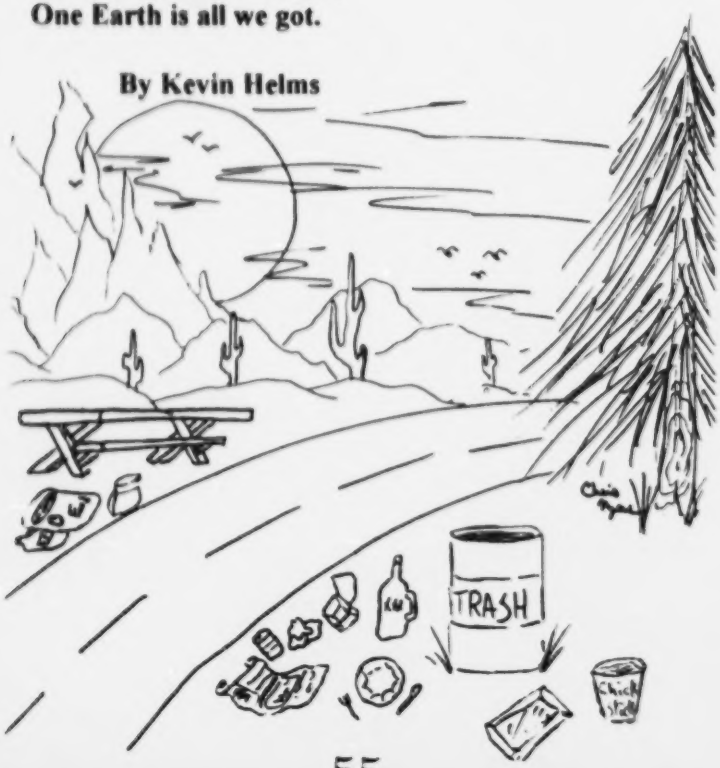
DEAD AND ALIVE

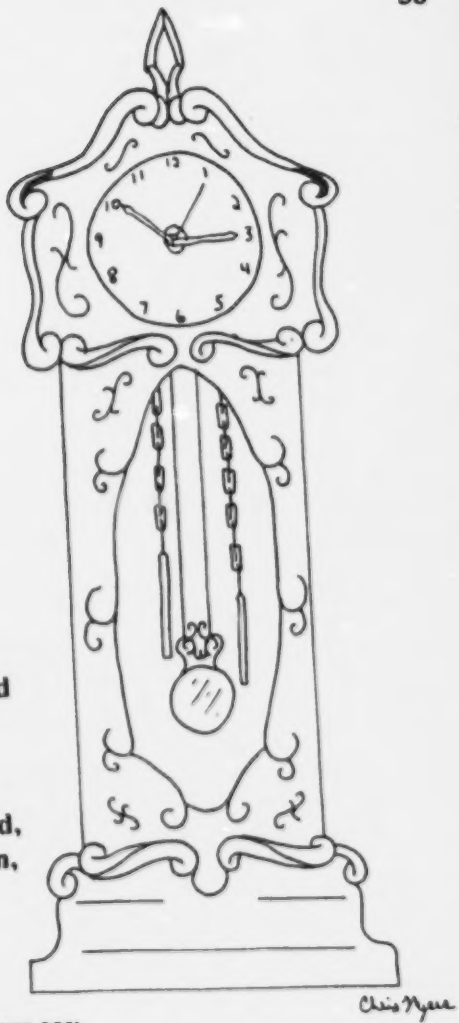
The devil wants me dead and alive.
He wants my soul not to survive.
He's always close,
He's always near,
I go to a bar,
He's in my beer.
Go home to watch TV.,
He's right there on the screen.
I take a walk and see a girl,
I look at her and think what a thrill.
It's hard to fight for I know I'll sin,
but for my soul he will not win.
I fight the for the good, and for what I believe.
I hat the damn devil, and the way he deceives.
He spreads all around evil jive,
He wants us all DEAD OR ALIVE.

By Bain

Garbage and trash piled up by the loads.
Filthy air and smog goes up our nose.
Shiploads of garbage floating along the seas.
They say it has no home.
They say it with ease.
Mountains of tires so very high.
I stood there, I looked, I asked myself "WHY?"
Bottles and cans along the freeways.
Hey, clean it up!
Why? No one cares anyway!
Oil and chemicals polluting our streams--Lets clean it up,
It's not as easy as it seems.
Stand here and look--give it a glance.
The young children of ours, they don't have a chance.
We better clean it up now, that's asking a lot.
Just one Earth to live on,
One Earth is all we got.

By Kevin Helms





TIME FOR SUCCESS

Those who never give up
and are always willing to try
are those most likely to succeed
and always get by.

Self satisfaction is the word
and is something that you need,
don't let self pity get you down,
it will only make you bleed.

Reach for the stars
the sky's the limit
as you've no doubt heard others say
by taking your time
and with a peace of mind,
you'll progress day by day.

So be understanding and positive
as you start your climb,
and great success among other things will come,
if you only give it time.

By Renea Vargo